

# MIXTURES

THE ORGAN OF THE BINGHAMTON CHAPTER, AGO

MARCH 2009



## THE DEAN'S LETTER . . .

This morning it was 22 degrees, but the sun is brilliant. Perhaps it will be spring soon and our gardens will burst into color. They could be either mental gardens or real, honest-to-goodness dirt gardens. But right now, there is the winter blanket of detritus to remove as we point towards the lengthening days and the culmination of Lent in the glory of Easter and rebirth.

We are fortunate to have such an involved chapter. Our group participation in a number of events over the past couple of years has been outstanding.

There was a large turnout for the organ crawl that was put together by Richard Sheasley. My thanks and admiration go to Richard for all of the ground work that he did in organizing the excursion and for the carefully executed handouts that described the various organs.

On March 21 (the 324th anniversary of the birth of J.S. Bach), Jonathan Biggers will continue his performances of the Complete Bach Werke. This is Number 4 of the three-year, fifteen-concert series. The concert is on a Saturday night at 8:00 p.m. at First Presbyterian in downtown Binghamton. I expect to see lots of us there.

I'm also looking forward to the BTOS concert on March 28 at 7:30 p.m. at the Forum. Stephen Ball will be performing and accompanying a Buster Keaton silent film.

Organists' work is of a very wide range and we must be flexible, but at all times, we must give our very best.

Soli Deo Gloria,

Laura

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Saturday, **Mar. 21 - 8 pm** Jonathan Biggers at First Presbyterian, Binghamton; this fourth concert in the all-Bach series will celebrate Bach's birthday.

Sunday, **Mar. 22 - 4 pm** *Romantic and Sacred Choral Works* by the Madrigal Choir at First Presbyterian, Binghamton; Pianists Jean Henssler and Margaret Reitz will perform duets by Rachmaninoff and organist Peter Browne will perform compositions by Healey Willan.

**Saturday, Mar. 28 - 9:30 am** AGO Board Meeting at Laura Kennedy's, 20 Lincoln Ave., Binghamton

Saturday, **Mar. 28 - 7:30 pm** Theater organ concert by Stephen Ball including Buster Keaton's silent film, *Seven Chances*

Sunday, **Mar. 29 - 4 pm** Dedicatory recital by Mark Laubach at St. Stephen's, Wilkes Barre. This concert celebrates the completion of the organ's Solo division. You can email Mark for more information about his program at [mlaubach@statephenswb.org](mailto:mlaubach@statephenswb.org).

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## FEBRUARY CHAPTER EVENT

"Change Is the Only Constant"

As the 16 chapter members and 8 guests who attended the February organ crawl know, organists are most adaptable when it comes to coping with "surprises". Funerals are a part of life which cannot be scheduled very far in advance, and so the crawl began 45 minutes late at the conclusion of a Funeral Mass at Saints John & Andrew R.C. Parish.

As we arrived, we climbed the first set of stairs that day to the choir loft and listened to the service. Afterwards, Jim Chvatal, parish organist, demonstrated the majestic sound of the Estey Opus 2491, 1926. Most of the pipe work is original but the organ had undergone a major rebuild including a new console in the late 1980's. Only a few of us had a chance to try the Estey ourselves before it was time to scurry over to Saints Cyril & Methodius R.C. Church as we played schedule catch-up!

Vella Melzer, CAGO, was awaiting us as we climbed Stairs #2 to the choir loft (pictured below). She asked Jim to demonstrate the 1929 Kilgen as he had been raised in St. Cyril's and had played the instrument "several years" ago. He related how a gas explosion in the church years ago had blown the organ console sideways but it is still playable today even as its age has "tired it". Again, we couldn't get in much playing time, except for playing schedule catch-up, and it was off to Maro's for lunch.

There were 22 of us for a splendid open menu lunch! Seated at 3 round tables, we

were quite sociable as we waited on a somewhat slow kitchen. Quickly paying the bill and leaving a tip, we once again participated in schedule catch-up.

Bruce Bosdes, parish organist for Holy Trinity R.C. Church, was at the church to greet us. He explained that through a merger with another parish, the church had acquired a 3-manual Eminent Digital Church Organ (built in the Netherlands). He used the auto-play feature as we were gathered at the front of the nave, for the organ was placed to the side there.

With Bruce leading, we then climbed Stairs #3 to hear the Ernest M. Skinner & Son, 3-manual pipe organ built in 1943 (perhaps their last opus). Bruce demonstrated the rich tones of the organ, but our turn to finger those "real ivories" was cut short by people coming early for Confession.

Perhaps the only item that remained unchanged for the crawl was that Daniel Lemieux, AAIO, was there to also answer questions. He is the organ builder/technician for all three of the treasured instruments we heard that day.

*Submitted by Richard Sheasley*



The Calendar, continued from p 1)

Saturday, **April 4 - 7 pm** Cecil B. DeMille's silent film, *The King of Kings*, accompanied by organist, Jim Ford. At Christ the King Lutheran Church, Plaza Drive, Vestal

Sunday, **April 19 - 4 - 6 pm** Workshop on *Building Your Church Choir* led by Michael Luby; at Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, 314 E. Main St.

Sunday, **May 17 - 4 - 6 pm** *Handbells in Worship* at First Congregational Church, Greene NY; reception to follow

Sunday, **June 7** - Annual Meeting and Installation of Officers. Time and location to be announced.

**July 1-4** Region I and II Joint Convention - Boston. More information at [www.agoboston2009.com](http://www.agoboston2009.com).

**First Congregational Church**  
Greene, NY  
  
***Handbells in Worship***  
(led by Ellie Rugg and Carolyn Blake)  
  
Sunday  
**May 17, 2009**  
4-6 pm

**MANY THANKS** to Jim Chvatal, Vella Melzer, Bruce Bosdes, Daniel Lemieux, and Richard Sheasley for hosting the highly successful organ crawl on Feb. 21.

**JOB OPENINGS**

**Organist** - Bethany Lutheran Church, Elmira. Minimum qualifications include ability to play the organ, familiarity with liturgical forms of worship, and experience providing accompaniment for congregational singing. Ability and willingness to play the piano/keyboard desirable. The organist works as a team with the Minister of Music and the Pastor. Salary commensurate with experience. Resume and cover letter to:  
Bethany Lutheran Church  
Attn: Pastor Abigail Zang Hoffman  
256 S. Walnut St.  
Elmira, NY 14904

**Organist** - for United Methodist Church. Call 724-4836 for information.

**FOR SALE** : Lowrey Coronation Home Organ; \$3,000 (\$12,995 new); attractive walnut console with rolltop; two 61-note manuals with 20-note pedalboard; many unique features; for further information contact Sylvia at 722-9234. Can be seen at Upstate Office Furniture.

***AGO Executive Board Meeting***  
(Officers, Executive Comm., Comm. Chairs)  
**Saturday, Mar. 28, 9:30 am**  
at Laura Kennedy's  
20 Lincoln Ave, Binghamton  
Important decisions must be made,  
Please plan to attend.